

Office of Professional Accountability (OPA) Commendations & Complaints Report June 2003

Commendations:

Commendations Received in June: 91

Commendations Received to Date: 452

Rank	Summary
Officer	Upon believing an intruder had entered my residence, I called for assistance and an officer responded within minutes. The officer took the man into custody and then searched the rest of the house. The officer was prepared, alert, calm, quiet, deliberate, thoughtful and considerate. Thank you.
Officer	We would like to thank the officer that has been helping us to get an order of harassment against our neighbor. The officer's report was well written and instrumental in the processing of the order.
Detective	We would like to thank the detective that hosted one of our students in a job shadow experience for the day. Career development is very important for our students. The student was able to ask questions relating to forensic science and to see many aspects of the job.
Officers (8) and Civilians (2)	We are most grateful for the opportunity to meet with a police officer and create a workshop regarding language and cultural differences in our community.
Officer	The victim of a possible residential burglary contacted SPD and stated that the officer was helpful, calming, compassionate and terrific. The victim was truly appreciative of the officer and SPD.
Officers (9)	A male and female pretending to be plainclothes police officers forced a 20 year-old female in their vehicle. The victim went to a hospital where she reported the incident and provided a detailed description of the suspects. She also provided the make of vehicle and license plate. Sexual Assault Unit (SAU) team members set-up a surveillance at suspects' home and Special Weapons and Tactical Team (SWAT) apprehended the suspects as they were exiting their home and driving away.
Officer	Provided assistance to a couple that saw their car being towed, but was unable to reach the scene before it was removed. The signage was unclear and there was a dealer error with license plates. The officer was commended as he went above the call of duty in his helpful professional behavior of respectfully assisting the public. SPD could not have asked for a better ambassador to demonstrate its mission to prevent crime, enforce the law and support quality public safety by delivering respectful, professional and dependable police services.
Detective	Out of state individual filed a missing person report on younger brother who was homeless. Detective provided assistance in locating the brother in a mental-facility in Washington state. Out of state individual said Detective performed an outstanding job of follow-up on a missing person report and members of SPD should be proud to have caring Detectives.
Sgt/Officers (7)	Gratitude and appreciation for the support of SPD in the planning, execution, and service of a Federal arrest warrant. SPD officers showed a high degree of knowledge, enthusiasm, professionalism and attention to detail before and during the operation. The officers made themselves immediately available upon request and after duty hours.
Officers (6)	The City of Seattle and SPD are to be congratulated on the openness and hospitality to out of state law enforcement agencies during the recent TOPPOFF

	Terrorism Exercise. Members of SPD displayed a high level of professionalism, attention to duty and a genuine desire to accommodate the stay in Seattle and are to be commended.
Officer	A fatal accident occurred and an officer handled a tragic situation in a manner deserving commendation. The officer was responsible for managing one of the victims during the investigation and kept him informed of how events were progressing. The officer had a calm and relaxed demeanor and helped to humanize the whole experience. Most of all, the officer was professional and sensitive to the emotional duress the victim was experiencing.
Parking Enforcement Officer	Commendation to a parking enforcement officer that issued a parking ticket. The officer's treatment was efficient with courtesy, good humor, and forthright fairness. The officer is a model of civility in the city of Seattle.
Officer	Officer visited an ESL Language Center and made a presentation on police officers. Teacher and students appreciated an interesting presentation and learned a lot.
Officers (2)	Elementary school students were taken on a precinct tour. The students responded with a letter of appreciation on how much they enjoyed learning all that the police did.
Lt (1) Sgt's (2) Det (1) Officer (2)	Officers' professionalism and hard work contributed to a better event at TOPOFF2.
Officers (7)	Officers assisted in response to an armed robbery. Officers had a description and detained the alleged suspect within three minutes of the incident. The suspicious person was transported and identified as the robber. Other officers assisted in a search for the discarded weapon.
Officers (7)	The video/audio portion of evidence shown to jurors was clear and precise in showing the arrest of a suspect. The jurors commented on how they were impressed with the professionalism of all of the officers.
Detective	A detective interviewed a traumatized individual seeking emergency assistance. The interview was completed with compassion while allowing dignity. The detective's work was truly outstanding and made a very bad situation bearable including a language barrier.
Officer (2)	Officer's responded to an intruder in a house. While no intruder was located, one officer explained their procedures while both officers took a witness statement from the people present. One officer returned the following day to inquire how the family was doing. The officer that interviewed me behaved professionally and competently and deserves recognition.
Sgt's (2) Officers (5)	Business employees commend the efforts of sergeants and officers in the apprehension of an individual on their property. The professionalism and prompt response of these officers truly reflects a dedication to the community and a pledge to duty. The efforts of SPD and timely actions of the officers helped to minimize a loss of customers and to make our community safer and more livable.
Officers (2)	Earlier in the year two officers helped family members gain entrance to a locked door on an elderly woman's residence. Family members and officers entered the residence together and found that the individual had passed away while sleeping. Family members were devastated and the officers knew the right things to say and do. Both officers are to be commended on the compassionate way they treated family members and handled the situation.
Officers (2) & 911 Operator	Officer's responded to a 911 call concerning an inebriated man outside of a residence who would not leave when asked to do so. Officers located the individual and reassured the caller the incident was complete and that they did not have to be concerned any further. The officers were helpful, polite efficient and reassuring. The 911 Operator was professional and the entire response reflected the excellent work done 24/7 by all concerned.
Detectives (2)	Detectives were called to Bank of America International Banking Center. A female was trying to cash another bank's check written on an out of state account against

	her out of state account, while using an international passport for identification. The bank has suffered extreme losses to fraud and this incident was similar. Detectives communicated with each other, found the female suspect was the same person from a previous fraud incident, and suspect confessed.
Officers (3)	Three officers responded to a missing person call from family members of an elderly female. The officers conducted a yard search and located subject at the end of a deep trail. The officers assisted in rescuing the female and she was taken to a hospital as a precaution. The officers are commended for their diligence in handling the incident. Without the officers assistance the elderly female may not have survived.
911 Dispatcher	While dispatching a detailed and involved pursuit, the dispatcher was calm and easily understood by all units and repeated all requests in a timely manner. The dispatcher is commended for a job well done.
Officer	Officer found a wallet from an out of state individual. The officer tracked down the individual and returned the wallet. Individual appreciated the officer's effort and action and expressed respect for SPD and officer's actions.
Officers (2)	An officer took a report of a car burglary and the two victims were very distraught. The officer was friendly, helpful, soothing and assisted with providing a bank phone number to cancel bank accounts. The initial officer and a second officer responded to another call later in the day where they were able to recover the majority of the items reported stolen. Sincere thanks and appreciation to the officers and the Department for doing a job well done.
Sergeant	Commendations to a Sergeant that was exceptional in assisting with problems several months ago. The Sergeant was friendly, helpful and showed perseverance on resolving a situation. The Sergeant is a credit to SPD.
Officers (2)	Appreciation for two officers who acted in a professional and courteous manner. The officers are a credit to SPD. (No specific act was mentioned in the commendation.)
Officer	Students of an elementary school appreciated an officer taking the time to talk to the entire school about their career.

June 2003 Closed Cases:

Cases involving alleged misconduct of officers and employees in the course of their official public duties are summarized below. Identifying information has been removed.

Cases are reported by allegation type. One case may be reported under more than one category.

UNNECESSARY FORCE

Synopsis	Action Taken
Complainant alleged the named officer used unnecessary force during the arrest of three subjects at a downtown grocery store.	The investigation showed that one of the three arrestees was aggressively combative. The statements of officer and independent witnesses support the officer's actions. The force used was documented, screened, and reported. Finding – EXONERATED.
Complainant alleged unnecessary force during a felony arrest.	The facts discovered in the investigation do not support the complainant's allegations. The subject and named officer did stumble down a flight of stairs, but not due to an application of force. There is no evidence to support the subject's claim, and the subject's credibility is poor. Finding – UNFOUNDED.
Complainant alleged the named officer's application of a Taser to a subject who was on drugs and exposing himself at the Seattle Center constituted unnecessary force.	The evidence showed that the subject was combative and suffering from some type of impairment. He was aggressive and fought with officers. The force used by the named officer was consistent with training, reported, and screened by a supervisor. Eleven civilian witnesses and four officer witnesses felt the force was appropriate. Finding – ADMINISTRATIVELY EXONERATED.
Complainant alleged unnecessary force when the named employee took him to the ground after a foot pursuit.	Evidence showed that the officer used necessary and appropriate force to contain the resisting subject. The force used was documented, screened, and reported. An independent witness confirmed the officer's statement. The complainant failed to cooperate and told the investigator he "wanted out." Finding – ADMINISTRATIVELY EXONERATED.
Complainant alleged named employee used unnecessary force against him by spraying him with pepper spray during a criminal trespass incident and arrest.	Investigation showed repeated contacts with complainant for mental illness, harassment, and assaults. During latest contact for residential trespass, reports and witnesses describe complainant as verbally and physically combative. Finding – ADMINISTRATIVELY EXONERATED.

MISUSE OF AUTHORITY/OBEDIENCE TO RULES

Synopsis	Action Taken
Complainant alleged the named officers falsely arrested and booked him into jail for investigation of burglary, and that the named supervisor negligently screened the arrest.	The evidence confirmed that the complainant had a legal right to be at the location and therefore was incorrectly arrested. The evidence also showed, however, that the named officers were professional and followed procedures. They were following the orders of their supervisor when they arrested and booked the subject. Based on the facts known at the time of the arrest, the named officers felt they had probable cause and there is no evidence of misconduct. Finding – ADMINISTRATIVELY UNFOUNDED. Although the supervisor's conduct did not rise to the level of misconduct, it was recommended that the matter be

	reviewed as a training and counseling tool. Finding – SUPERVISORY REFERRAL.
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CONDUCT UNBECOMING AN OFFICER

Synopsis	Action Taken
Complainants alleged that the named officer, who was working a traffic post at a parade, was rude to them when they stopped to ask directions, using a profane term and hitting the hood of the complainants' car.	The evidence did not establish by a preponderance of the evidence what words were used by either party, or whether the officer hit the complainant's car. Finding – NOT SUSTAINED.

VIOLATION OF RULES/REGULATIONS/LAWS

Synopsis	Action Taken
Complainant alleged he was panhandling when he was arrested and transported in a patrol vehicle while handcuffed and without lawful purpose. The complainant further alleged the officer challenged him to a fight, called him a derogatory term, and released him without citing him. In addition, the chain of command alleged the officer had made false statements to his supervisor, in his report, and in the internal investigation.	Investigation showed by a preponderance of the evidence that the named officer had detained the complainant without cause and without supervisory screening, and called him a derogatory term. The evidence further showed that the officer had written a false report and made false statements. Findings for Violation of Rules/Regulations/Laws; CUBO; and False/Misleading Statements – SUSTAINED.

Definitions of Findings:

“Sustained” means the allegation of misconduct is supported by a preponderance of the evidence.

“Not sustained” means the allegation of misconduct was neither proved nor disproved by a preponderance of the evidence.

“Unfounded” means a preponderance of evidence indicates the alleged act did not occur as reported or classified, or is false.

“Exonerated” means a preponderance of evidence indicates the conduct alleged did occur, but that the conduct was justified, lawful and proper.

Referred for Supervisory Resolution.

Training or Policy Recommendation means that there has been no willful violation but that there may be deficient policies or inadequate training that need to be addressed.

“Administratively Unfounded/Exonerated” is a discretionary finding which may be made prior to the completion that the complaint was determined to be significantly flawed procedurally or legally; or without merit, i.e., complaint is false or subject recants allegations, preliminary investigation reveals mistaken/wrongful employee identification, etc, or the employee’s actions were found to be justified, lawful and proper and according to training.

“Administratively Inactivated” means that the investigation cannot proceed forward, usually due to insufficient information or the pendency of other investigations. The investigation may be reactivated upon the discovery of new, substantive information or evidence. Inactivated cases will be included in statistics but may not be summarized in this report if publication may jeopardize a subsequent investigation.

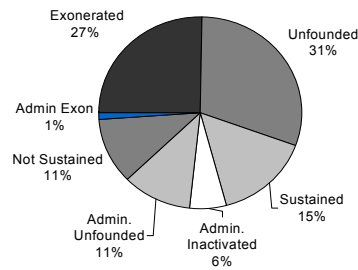
Status of OPA Contacts to Date:

2002 Contacts

	December 2002	Jan. - Dec. 2002
Contact Logs	50	573
Cases Assigned for Supervisory Review	11	104
Cases Assigned for Investigation (IS; LI)	17	201
Cases Closed	12	174*
Commendations	27	1,416

*includes 2002 cases closed in 2003

CHART A
Dispositions of Allegations in Completed Investigations
2002 Cases
N=330 Allegations in 174 cases



2003 Contacts

	June 2003	Jan-Dec 2003
Contact Logs	51	303
Cases Assigned for Supervisory Review	7	45
Cases Assigned for Investigation (IS;LI)	11	84
Commendations	91	452